

BACKGROUND PAPER No. 15

PLANNING GROUP FOR REPORTING AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

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SUBJECT: Summary of Comments made by [REDACTED] to the Agency Planning Group for a Mechanically Integrated Reporting and Communications System on 15 January 1959. [REDACTED] is the Chief of the Reports and Requirements Staff of the DDP/WE Division.

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[REDACTED] was invited to present a Division Chief Reports Officer's point of view on the processing of information within the Clandestine Services and reasons for delays occurring during this processing, as well as suggesting ways and means of eliminating these delays.

1. WE Division is continually exerting a concerted effort to improve the quality of its reporting and to insure that station complements include personnel who are qualified to prepare CS reports in final form. Constant efforts are being made to indoctrinate the operations officers going to the field with the principle that the techniques of positive information reporting are also their business and not just the business of reports specialists. For real improvement in the performance of our basic mission - the collection of significant and timely intelligence information - we must develop greater reporting competence in our operational personnel. This is especially important in those stations too small to have full-time reports officers. In my talks with representatives of foreign liaison services, both in Washington and in the field, I have stressed the need for improving the quality of the reporting and have provided them with a sanitized version of our manuals dealing with the essential elements of good reporting. We have evidence that some of this material has been translated and passed on to their staff officers in the field.

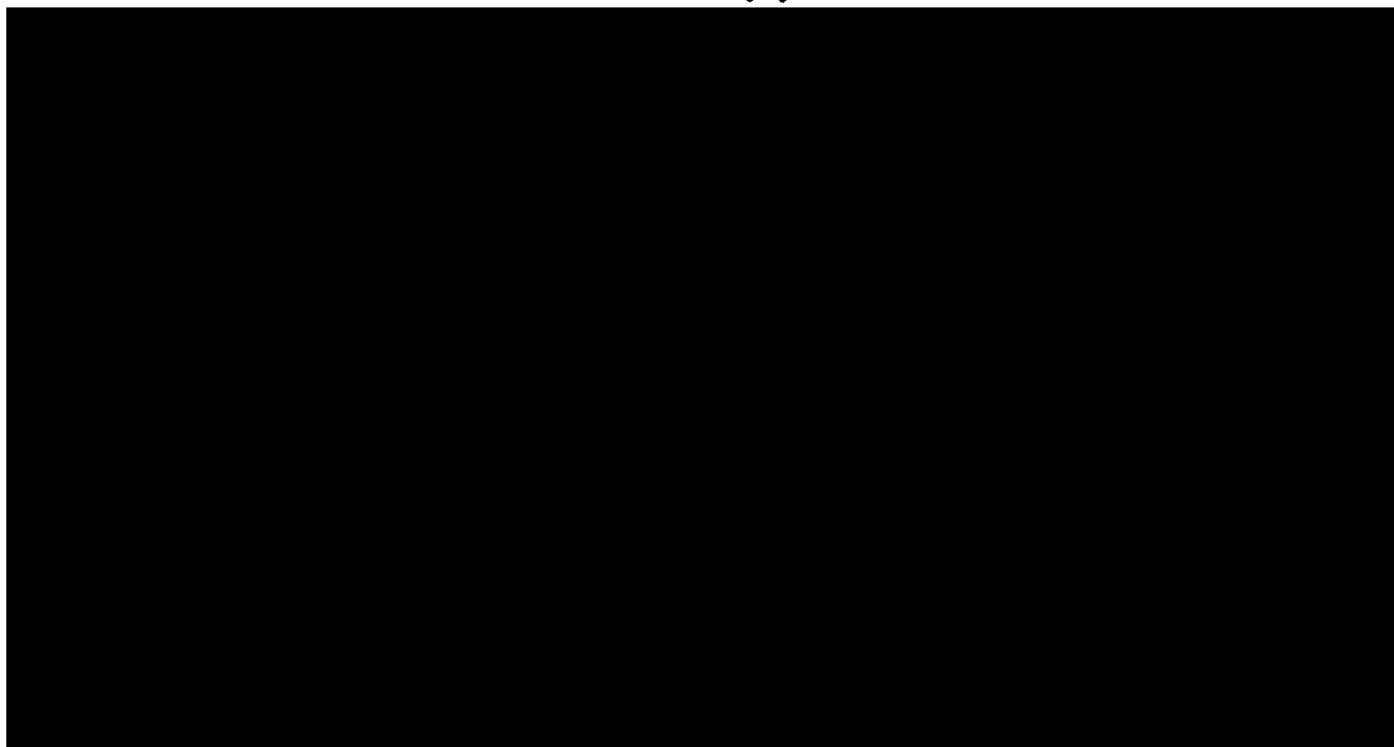
2. Progress has been made along these lines, as evidenced by the improvement in both the format and the quality of the information now received by cable and in the increase in the number of CS reports prepared in the field on multilith mats. Information received by cable is readily disseminated by TD, a process which, with the excellent cooperation of the Cable Secretariat, has appreciably reduced the processing time of the information and expedited delivery to customer agencies. Reports received on multilith mats prepared in the field are quickly processed and, if they are of acceptable quality, are quickly sent to reproduction for direct dissemination to the customer agencies.

3. Notwithstanding all this evidence of progress, surveys prepared by responsible units still reveal intolerable delays in the processing of information and its transmission to customer agencies. It seems that in most of the surveys completed we have concerned ourselves with the movements of pieces of paper from the time they are collected in the field to the time they are received by the customer agencies. There is very little appreciation by those who are concentrating on the problems of mechanics for what is in these papers. A closer attention to content would in many cases reveal reasons, sometimes justifiable, for the delays.

4. There is no problem when the information collected is in response to a specific requirement levied on the Clandestine Services. It is this type of information which is generally sent in by cable or prepared in the field on

multilith mat. When the information is responsive to an established need and its relevance is clear, there is no question as to its disseminability. However, a great bulk of the information collected is not responsive to specific requirements but, when disseminated, readily finds a customer. We have in the community analysts with an insatiable appetite for information regardless of the irrelevancy of the information to their specific needs. The analyst finds it difficult to define the gaps which warrant covert collection. It is easier for him to say that he wants everything we collect. It is this prevailing attitude which causes our CS production to increase every year, and thus make for some of the unnecessary delays in the processing of information and take time away from concentrating on the more significant aspects of our collection effort.

5. In conducting surveys, we should pay more attention to the substance of the reports and recommend ways and means of cutting down on the reporting not responsive to requirements reflecting the gaps to be covered by the Clandestine Services. The following statistics for 1954-58, obtained from FI/RQM, illustrate the tendency to disseminate more and more every year:



6. It is interesting to note here the yearly increases in the number of PD's and TD's. PD's were the preliminary disseminations made of CS reports which were teletyped by the Cable Secretariat to the customer agencies. In 1956 the TD dissemination was introduced. Although "TD" stands for teletype dissemination, they are prepared on a mat and reproduced by the Cable Secretariat. Most are delivered to the customer agencies by courier; Top Secret and Limited TD's are transmitted by teletype. The yearly increase in the number of TD's is evidence of the fact that the disseminating desks are taking full advantage of this expeditious way of transmitting the information to customer agencies. Most TD's are based on cabled information

which is obviously timely and generally responsive to a need. The handling of the routine CS, CSLT, and CSDB presents an entirely different situation. This is where most of the intolerable delays occur. Some of the delays are attributable to the difficulty of determining the relevance of the information, some to the fact that the information received is in a foreign language and must be translated, and some to reproduction backlogs.

7. More meaningful and more pointed requirements will certainly help in ensuring that significant information is given priority processing. Note the large number of reports received which are not disseminated. This is mostly attributable to requirements which are not sufficiently pointed, thereby making it difficult for the field to select with unerring judgment items which will be disseminated. Moreover even these non-disseminated reports are not completely wasted in Headquarters, but are frequently used for internal purposes. Field personnel are now eliminating a substantial percentage of reports received which obviously do not contain information of any intelligence value.

25X6 8. Experience has shown that the problem of translation of foreign language documents has greatly influenced the speed with which CS disseminations are handled, and has caused delays in obtaining timely guidance and evaluations from customer agencies. With the exception of the [REDACTED] branch, all WE branches are currently receiving a significant portion of their reports in untranslated form - largely as a result of extensive liaison operations. In addition to reports received in the eleven Western European languages (which frequently cannot be translated in the field because of the number of pages involved), occasional reports, particularly those resulting from technical operations, are received in languages which neither the field nor our WE Headquarters personnel could be expected to translate. Very frequently, because of the broad scope of WE's liaison exchange, the untranslated material deals with areas outside WE's reports jurisdiction.

9. With few exceptions, WE Division has adequate language facilities to handle reports which deal with the Western European area. The problem is in the handling of reports which deal with other geographic areas. Under current procedures, the reports on other areas are sent in the raw directly to the substantive area concerned. Because of lack of language proficiency these reports often become part of the backlog until the other area reports officer has the time to consult the reports office of the originating branch for a gist of the document so as to be able to determine its disseminability. If disseminable the report is then sent to the Foreign Documents Division for translation. If the information appears to be significant, the field and/or the collecting branch will whenever possible prepare a gist of the document, which is then passed on to the substantive disseminating area for a determination of disseminability. In exceptional cases, either because of the sensitivity of the source or the urgency of the information, the collecting branch will translate the document. However, the translation facilities on hand are not sufficient to meet the needs of the various divisions receiving foreign language material.

10. Several surveys have shown the long delays that occur in FDD, and by the time the dissemination is made the information is no longer timely or significant. In many cases the document is disseminated as a CSLT, providing

a brief summary or description of the document and attaching the original and untranslated report to the CSLT. In these cases, if a request for an evaluation is made, several customers may return the original document, commenting that they have no language capability and therefore cannot evaluate the report until a translation is made.

11. There is obviously a great need for translation facilities manned by qualified linguists readily available to the operating divisions responsible for the dissemination of the foreign language material. We would then be able to avoid the great loss to all concerned which occurs when customers are unable to make use of our material.

12. As for the delays in reproduction, this is, in my opinion, a matter that should be studied not by making surveys as to how long it takes to move the paper, but by a study of what kinds of paper are being processed by the reproduction unit. I see no reason why we cannot have a reproduction unit for the handling of ordinary CS disseminations equivalent to that now available in the Cable Secretariat for handling TD's. TD's are processed in the Cable Secretariat within an hour after they are received ready for delivery to the customer agencies; CS disseminations will at times take weeks before they are processed and delivered to customer agencies.

13. One of the factors that has made for such expeditious handling of TD's has been the arrangement made between the Cable Secretariat and the Department of the Army Staff Communications Office, whereby the Cable Secretariat delivers to this office a copy of the TD and the TD mat itself. The Army Staff Communications Office will then take care of running off the necessary copies to effect distribution in the Pentagon. Included in this distribution are the following customers:

- Department of the Army
- Army Security Agency
- Department of the Air Force
- The Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Office of the Secretary of Defense

This arrangement is saving the Agency considerable money in man-hours in the processing of the TD's and has above all made for a more timely delivery of the information to the analysts. Why can't this be done with our routine CS material? From talking to representatives in the Cable Secretariat, I have learned that the Department of the Army is delighted with such an arrangement and therefore I feel that an extension of this arrangement to include our routine CS reports mats will prove of mutual benefit. I will undertake to take this matter up with the appropriate offices in DDP and suggest that some serious consideration be given to this matter.

14. Another possible cause for delays is the processing of CSLT's. This provides a format for disseminating bulky attachments or foreign language documents which are considered of limited interest to one or two customers in the community and therefore not worth full processing. A brief description is given of the document which is then attached to a mat which tells the customers in the community that the document is available in the CIA Library and if they

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are interested they may request photo-copies from the Library through OCR. The mat is processed by the same reproduction unit that processes all other CS's. The CSLT has become more or less an accession list of documents available in the CIA Library which because of the limited interest or marginal value of the information were not worth complete processing. It seems to me that the CSLT should be considered as a separate category of dissemination and a type that could possibly be processed by OCR-once provided with a summary of the document. Possibly a periodic accession list could be put out by the CIA Library itself of the documents which are now processed as CSLT's. Again I will take up this matter with the appropriate DDP offices.

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16. WE Division is in accord with the efforts now being made to take advantage of all modern developments in the field of high-speed transmission. However these developments should be accepted only as they fit or serve DDP needs. While it is true that intelligence information is a perishable product and must be handled with utmost speed, it is also true that the product of covert collection must undergo certain processing before passage to a consumer. The exception to this is where we have been able to define certain types of critical information which is so patently urgent and serious that it is imperative to give immediate and direct dissemination to the community - i.e., the CRITIC system.

17. It is imperative that any communications system for intelligence information be adapted to the necessary peculiarities of intelligence collection and processing, rather than try to fit the intelligence collection effort to a high-speed system solely for the sake of speed. The fact should be stressed

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that no intelligence organization engaged in covert collection can operate entirely for the sake of speed with security - security meaning not only the steps necessary to protect operations and sources, but also the steps necessary for the organization to bring its talents to bear on an information report so that the report may reach a consumer with some guarantee of its validity and accuracy.

18. We are often told about the complaints of the various analysts who are being flooded with a mass of paper, making it difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. We should concentrate our efforts in reducing the mass of paper by a clearer division of labor among the USIB members, and avoid the duplication of effort now apparent in several categories of intelligence information reporting. This will certainly entail a sharpening of the requirements levied on each collector as well as more coordination among the various USIB representatives both in headquarters and in the field.

19. There is nothing more frustrating than putting out a TD in the middle of the night or during a weekend and then calling the analyst in the customer agency on the following day (or on Monday afternoon if a weekend is involved) to find that he has not as yet seen the TD and therefore cannot comment on it. In most cases there is evidence of the fact that the TD reached a receiving point in the customer agency but it had not as yet been distributed to the appropriate analysts or desk officers. When we have complained about this, we have been told that this is an internal matter of the customer agency. I disagree with this position. It is to our interest to see that the information gets to the competent people as expeditiously as the dissemination is handled. The same sense of urgency must exist in the minds of the receiving agencies.

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20. Consideration should be given to the adaptation [REDACTED] system, wherein one agency is the sole consumer of certain broad categories of information. This would appreciably reduce the volume of paper now flowing from this Agency and leave consumer agencies more time to prepare finished intelligence, in fields where their competence lies.

21. By expediting the dissemination of routine CS information to consumers in Washington we will eliminate the duplication now taking place when a CS report is passed laterally in the field to local USIB representatives, who in turn transmit these reports (in many cases in toto) to their parent organization for internal use only. The reason for doing this, they say, is that they can get the information back to their parent organization within a few days while it takes weeks before they would receive it from CS in Washington.

22. Last, but not least, is the stature to be granted to the reports function and to the reports officers in headquarters and in the field. Since 1955 there has been a great deal done to elevate the stature of this function. However, a great deal more needs to be done in developing intelligence officers around whom centers the integrated effort to collect and disseminate meaningful intelligence information.